

Message Text

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ORIGIN CU-03

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 USIA-06 /022 R

DRAFTED BY CU/EE:WTPRYCE:AMM

APPROVED BY CU/EE:YRICHMOND

EUR/SOV:FDEMARZO

DESIRED DISTRIBUTION

USIA/IEU:WDEMITZ

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P R 192256Z FEB 76

FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW PRIORITY

INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

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E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS:OEXC,UR

SUBJECT:EXCHANGES: EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION SEMINAR AND
JOINT COMMISSION ON TEXTBOOKS

REF: MOSCOW 1751; 268; 2407

1. DEPT CONTINUES TO BE MOST RELUCTANT TO ATTEMPT TO ARRANGE SEMINAR IN EDUCATION INFORMATION SYSTEMS IN MARCH WITH 12 SOVIETS IN ATTENDANCE. AS EMBASSY AWARE, THIS IS COMPLETELY NEW TOPIC, ABOUT WHICH THERE WAS NO DISCUSSION PRIOR TO SOVIET JANUARY REQUEST. TOPIC OF LITTLE INTEREST TO AMERICAN EDUCATORS WHO WOULD HAVE LITTLE TO LEARN FROM SOVIETS IN SEMINAR. WE ALSO FORESEE CONSIDERABLE DIFFICULTY IN ARRANGING FOR AMERICAN PARTICIPANTS AND LITTLE POSSIBILITY OF FINDING ORGANIZATION TO HELP FUND US PARTICIPATION. UNDER SUCH CIRCUMSTANCES COSTS OF FUNDING SEMINAR WOULD BE PROHIBITIVELY HIGH.

2. EXPERIENCE HAS SHOWN THAT IT TAKES AT LEAST SIX MONTHS TO
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PREPARE PROPERLY FOR A SEMINAR UNDER THE BEST OF CIRCUMSTAN-

CES WHEN BOTH SIDES HAVE AGREED ON TOPICS TO BE DISCUSSED,
AS WITH RECENT EARLY CHILDHOOD SEMINAR HELD IN SOVIET UNION,
AND SEMINAR ON HIGHER EDUCATION SCHEDULED HERE IN MARCH.

3. SOVIETS ARE IN EFFECT ATTEMPTING TO AVOID RETURN SEMINAR ON EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION, WHICH IS OF CONSIDERABLE INTEREST TO US EDUCATORS, AND TO SUBSTITUTE A LARGE ONE-WAY SEMINAR DESIGNED TO PROVIDE A LARGE GROUP OF SOVIETS WITH AS MUCH INFORMATION AS POSSIBLE ABOUT US UTILIZATION OF COMPUTERS IN EDUCATION.

4. DEPT APPRECIATES NEED TO MAINTAIN FORWARD MOMENTUM IN EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGES, AND DOES NOT WISH TO BE TOTALLY NEGATIVE IN RESPONDING TO SHIRINSKY'S REQUEST. WE ARE EXPLORING POSSIBLE TOPICS FOR A SEMINAR WHICH WOULD TAKE INTO ACCOUNT INTERESTS OF SOVIET AS WELL AS US EDUCATORS. WE WILL ADVISE ASAP.

5. IN MEANTIME, WE ARE WILLING TO CONSIDER RECEIVING A SMALL SOVIET DELEGATION (4 OR 5) ON EDUCATION INFORMATION SYSTEMS IN LATE MARCH OR EARLY APRIL IF EMBASSY SO RECOMMENDS. SINCE SUCH A DELEGATION IS NOT NOW INCLUDED IN REVISED EMBASSY BUDGET PROPOSAL (MOSCOW 1107), IT MAY BE NECESSARY TO SUBSTITUTE IT FOR SOME OTHER PROJECT OF LOWER PRIORITY IN ORDER TO FUND IT. COST IS ESTIMATED AT DOLS 1300 PER PERSON FOR TWO WEEK STAY.

6. RE JOINT COMMISSION ON TEXT BOOKS, RATHER THAN SET UP SPECIAL MECHANISM, MORE PRACTICAL APPROACH WOULD BE TO INCLUDE DISCUSSION OF TEXT BOOKS WITHIN PROGRAMS OF FUTURE US AND SOVIET EDUCATION DELEGATIONS. INGERSOLL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 19 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976STATE040445
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: WTPRYCE:AMM
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760063-0236
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760233/aaaabcmz.tel
Line Count: 92
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN CU
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 MOSCOW 1751
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 MAY 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <02 JUL 2004 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: XCHANGES: EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION SEMINAR AND JOINT COMMISSION ON TEXTBOOKS
TAGS: OEXC, UR
To: MOSCOW
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006